

In the early days, his work mainly consisted of simple plumbing with water storage tanks and wind driven pumps. Between 1918–1927, business continued to grow as the demand for modern indoor plumbing increased. In 1933, Andy Thorsen the Plumber moved to 134 Lander Avenue to a larger facility.

As post war construction boomed across the nation, Thorsen's grew with the continued increase in new homes and business construction. Eventually, Andy expanded his business to include plumbing, heating, sheet metal, storage tanks, pumps, motors, windmills, hardware and paint.

During the 1950's, air conditioning became popular in the central valley providing comfort and quality to homes. Thorsen's responded by expanding their services to include central air conditioning and heating.

Thorsen's saw its greatest expansion during the 1960's and 1970's. Andy Thorsen's two sons, Rodney and Andy Jr., were both involved as partners in the business until 1965 when Rodney took over as president became sole owner of "Thorsen's Plumbing & Air Conditioning Inc." The name change reflected the growing importance of air conditioning.

In 1977, Rodney Thorsen completed the purchase of 20 acres of land and built a 19,500 sq. ft. building on North Walnut, employing 80–100 people and expanded to include commercial, residential and service for plumbing and HVAC throughout the Merced and Stanislaus counties. Rodney managed the company for the next 20 years and in 1984, his youngest son Norman graduated from college and returned to Turlock to take over the reins of the company. In 1988, Norman was involved in a serious automobile accident which forced Rodney to take over managing the company again.

Over the next 14 years, Norman was able to help Rodney manage the company on a limited basis. Through the skill and devotion of key long-term employees in the office and the field, Thorsen's Inc. was able to remain competitive.

In 2002, Craig Pitau was asked to join Thorsen's as the General Manager and was given the opportunity to purchase ownership in the company. Craig worked with Norman managing Thorsen's until Norman's untimely passing in 2004. In 2005, Rodney also passed away. Today, the company is owned by Carl Thorsen, Don Thorsen, Judy Thorsen Enchelmayer and Craig Pitau.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in praising Thorsen's Plumbing & Air Conditioning Inc. for their 100 years of operation.

COMMEMORATING NATIONAL FAMILY CAREGIVERS MONTH

HON. LAURA RICHARDSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 10, 2011

Ms. RICHARDSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the 65 million Americans who spend on average 20 hours per week selflessly caring for family members or friends who, through age, disability, or illness, have lost the ability to care for themselves.

For most of us, the act of caring for those in need is a basic aspect of what it means to be human. Compassion, either through charitable giving or community service, is inseparable from American ideals of human rights for every member of our society. Whenever we treat those around us as we want to be treated, we contribute to a culture of responsibility and respect for life that leads us to do great things in the name of humanity.

Last week, President Barack Obama proclaimed November 2011 as National Family Caregivers Month. Anyone who spends time caring for a loved one in need is considered a family caregiver. Let us use this occasion to honor these everyday heroes and raise awareness of the profound contributions they make to society.

Family caregivers save taxpayers hundreds of billions of dollars each year through their efforts.

According to studies compiled by the National Family Caregivers Association, the value of the unpaid services provided each year is estimated to be \$375 billion, which is almost twice as much as the \$158 billion spent in 2009 on homecare and nursing home services combined.

In my home state of California alone there were 3,419,481 family caregivers in 2004 providing over \$36 billion worth of care. Though they are mostly untrained, family caregivers now provide about 80% of all long-term care in the United States.

Imagine if taxpayers had to foot the full bill. Now, more than ever, family caregivers are essential to providing the best services and deserve the support of government and the medical community.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, the US Census projects a massive growth in the number of Americans 65 and older as the baby-boomer generation ages. Populations in this age bracket will double in 23 states by 2030.

As medical progress means longer lives, families struggle to provide long-term family care than they did in past decades. Families are smaller and more spread out, and many family caregivers must juggle work and raising children in addition to their caregiving respon-

sibilities. Family caregivers may need to operate complex medical equipment or practice delicate procedures without any formal training.

The "graying of America" will have a tremendous impact on families providing care for their older members.

Many public health officials are concerned that we may not be ready to assume the roles of family caregivers. Studies suggest that many Americans have not spent much time thinking about or preparing for long-term care. People who have no experience as a family caregiver may have extreme difficulty in approaching such a responsibility.

Mr. Speaker, the fact is that most of us will find ourselves in a similar situation, either giving or requiring long term care at various points in our lives.

Family caregivers often put themselves second as they balance competing commitments to their jobs, families, and communities. Tragically, more than 1 in 10 family caregivers report that their physical health has deteriorated as a result of extreme stress.

Family caregivers experiencing extreme stress have been shown to age prematurely. This level of stress can take as much as 10 years off a family caregiver's life.

Mr. Speaker, 40 to 70 percent of family caregivers have clinically significant symptoms of depression with approximately a quarter to half of these caregivers meet the diagnostic criteria for major depression.

We must also remember that many disabled veterans are supported by family caregivers. Having given so much for their country, I believe that they and their family members should not have to struggle to live out a full, dignified life.

Therefore, we should do everything possible to support family caregivers and lighten their burdens.

It begins with encouraging people to take adequate steps to prepare for their future care. This means setting aside funds to cover unforeseen medical expenses, signing a living will, and making preparations with family and friends. Health professionals must be sensitive to the needs of family caregivers and enlist them in formulating a patient's long-term care plan.

We also need to make sure that family caregivers have access to information and resources that can help them meet their responsibilities with minimal strain and unnecessary cost.

Finally, we must ensure that the concerns of family caregivers are reflected in all major healthcare legislation.

We are all family caregivers, Mr. Speaker. I urge my colleagues to work together to support human dignity and the American family.